

"EVENTS ONLY REINFORCE THE NEED FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM"

San Antonio, TX - On Wednesday, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement authorities discovered a smuggling operation in San Antonio whereby 51 migrants were found living in a "stash house" in the Northwest side of the city.

"I am extremely saddened by these events. It is disheartening to know that there are individuals out there who would so readily take advantage of these migrants and put them in a position to be exploited," noted Rep. Charlie Gonzalez. He added, "I don't believe this is a one-time incident, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement must employ every effort to root out this band of smugglers in San Antonio."

Rep. Gonzalez stated, "this situation only reinforces the need for immigration reform and for worksite enforcement, two things the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives has refused to address. These smugglers must have had an employer in mind who they knew would have a job available and would be willing to exploit these migrants. If there was not a job waiting for them, I doubt these migrants would have risked their lives and put their fate in the hands of smugglers."

The Congressman introduced legislation (H.R. 4038) last year to increase the fines against employers caught hiring undocumented immigrants. In addition, the bill includes language that would bar these same employers from receiving Federal contracts and would strip farmers of their agricultural subsidies if they hire undocumented workers. The fines collected would be redistributed to state and local governments for reimbursement of health, education and law enforcement services provided to undocumented workers. It was submitted also as an amendment to last year's immigration legislation (H.R. 4437), passed in the House, but it failed to garner a majority of votes.